

Croft Church of England Primary School

Role Description – Chair of Governors (Based on NGA Guidance)

Role Purpose: Leading governance in schools

The Chair delegates roles and ensures other governors are fully involved and fulfil their functions for the proper governance of the school.

Leading governance in schools

- To ensure that the governing board and headteacher have a shared sense of purpose.
- To ensure the governing board sets a clear vision and strategy for the school(s).
- To lead the board in monitoring the headteacher's implementation of the school strategy.

Leading and developing the team

- To ensure the board has the required skills to govern well, and that appointments made fill any identified skills gaps.
- To ensure all governors receive appropriate induction, ongoing training as needed and have a thorough understanding of their role.
- To ensure members of the board act reasonably and in line with the board's agreed code of conduct.
- To develop a good working relationship with the vice chair(s), ensuring s/he is kept fully informed and delegating tasks as appropriate.
- To ensure that board members feel valued and encourage their development.
- To carry out a performance review of each governor.
- To ensure that there is a plan for succession for the chair, vice-chair and any committee chairs, and that by recommending limits on office, there is always a mix of new and experienced members.

The chair, the headteacher and accountability

- To build an effective, professional relationship with the headteacher based on trust and mutual respect for each other's roles. This allows for honest conversations, to act as a sounding board, provide support and offer advice and information. Ensuring there are no surprises at meetings.
- To meet regularly with the headteacher.
- To make it clear that all governors must accept collective responsibility for decisions taken at governors' meetings
- To ensure that there are transparent and effective processes for the recruitment and induction of the headteacher.
- To ensure appropriate governor involvement in the recruitment of senior leaders.
- To ensure all governors concentrate on their strategic role, receive information fit for purpose and hold the headteacher to account.
- To report any urgent action taken on behalf of the Governing Body, making sure it is fully explained
- To oversee and participate in the headteacher's performance review, ensuring that appropriate CPD (continuing professional development) is provided.
- To ensure that the headteacher provides staff with an understanding of the role of the governing board and acts as link between the two.
- Where required, represent the governing board in its dealings with external partners and be an advocate for the school.
- To attend school functions (plays/sports days/prize giving) as appropriate and encourage other governors to do so.
- Report decisions of the Governing Body to parents, staff and others regularly
- To ensure that complaints made to the governing board are dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

Leading school improvement

- To ensure the board is involved at a strategic level in the school's self-evaluation process and that this feeds into the key priorities.
- To ensure the board's business is focussed on the key strategic priorities, that meetings run effectively and make best use of time available. Ensuring all members have an equal opportunity to participate in discussion and decision making.
- To take the lead in representing the governing board at relevant external meetings with agencies such as Ofsted, the Department for Education and the local authority.
- To ensure the board has mechanisms in place to obtain and listen to the views of parents, pupils and staff.
- To ensure the governing board adopts a visits protocol which is linked to monitoring key strategic priorities: The chair who should already have a good knowledge of the school will need to consider whether s/he needs to continue such formal monitoring visits or whether these are now best delegated to the team.

Leading governing board business

- With the clerk and the headteacher, to plan for the board meetings, ensuring that agendas focus on the board's key responsibilities and strategic priorities and reducing unnecessary paperwork.
- Chair meetings effectively and promote an open culture on the governing board that allows ideas and discussion to thrive whilst ensuring clear decisions are reached as quickly as possible.
- To collaborate with the clerk to establish effective working procedures and sound committee structures.
- To ensure that decisions taken at the meetings of the governing body are implemented.
- To ensure the governing board appoint a professional clerk capable of providing advice on the board's functions and that s/he is appraised and developed.

Appointing the Chair

In maintained schools and standalone academies this is a decision for the governing board. NGA members can see NGA's recommended process for this in the Guidance Centre - Electing a chair

What skills/attributes should a chair have?

Candidates for chair should be able to demonstrate a good selection of the skills/attributes set out below:

- Commitment to the school
- Good understanding of the environment in which the school is operating and wider education policy
- Personal integrity
- Negotiation and diplomacy skills
- Good understanding of the legal responsibilities of the board as both individuals and a corporate entity
- Strong communication skills
- Good organisational skills
- Ability to think strategically
- Ability to prioritise
- Ability to chair meetings well
- Ability to have courageous conversations and make courageous decisions
- Ability to build and get the best out of a team
- Capacity to process information quickly and understand relevant data
- Ability to delegate